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ABSTRACT

The U.S. frontier (1785-1861) is the focus of this unit of study for grades 5 and up. This unit contains four elements: (1) a list of documents with their specific archival reference numbers and a brief synopsis of their historical significance to the unit's theme; (2) a set of reproductions of documents; (3) 15 separate classroom activities; and (4) an issue of "Cobblestone" magazine related to the subject matter of this study. The unit helps students develop knowledge of social studies content and introduces them to historical documents. This approach helps students advance to higher-level thinking and experience and practice of the following skills: collecting, organizing, interpreting, and weighing the significance of factual evidence to achieve a systematic analysis of documents; comparing evidence from different sources; identifying factual information and separating it from opinion; identifying points of view and biases; and developing defensible inference, conclusion, and generalizations from factual evidence. A list of diverse additional resources for both students and teachers concludes the unit. (BT)

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